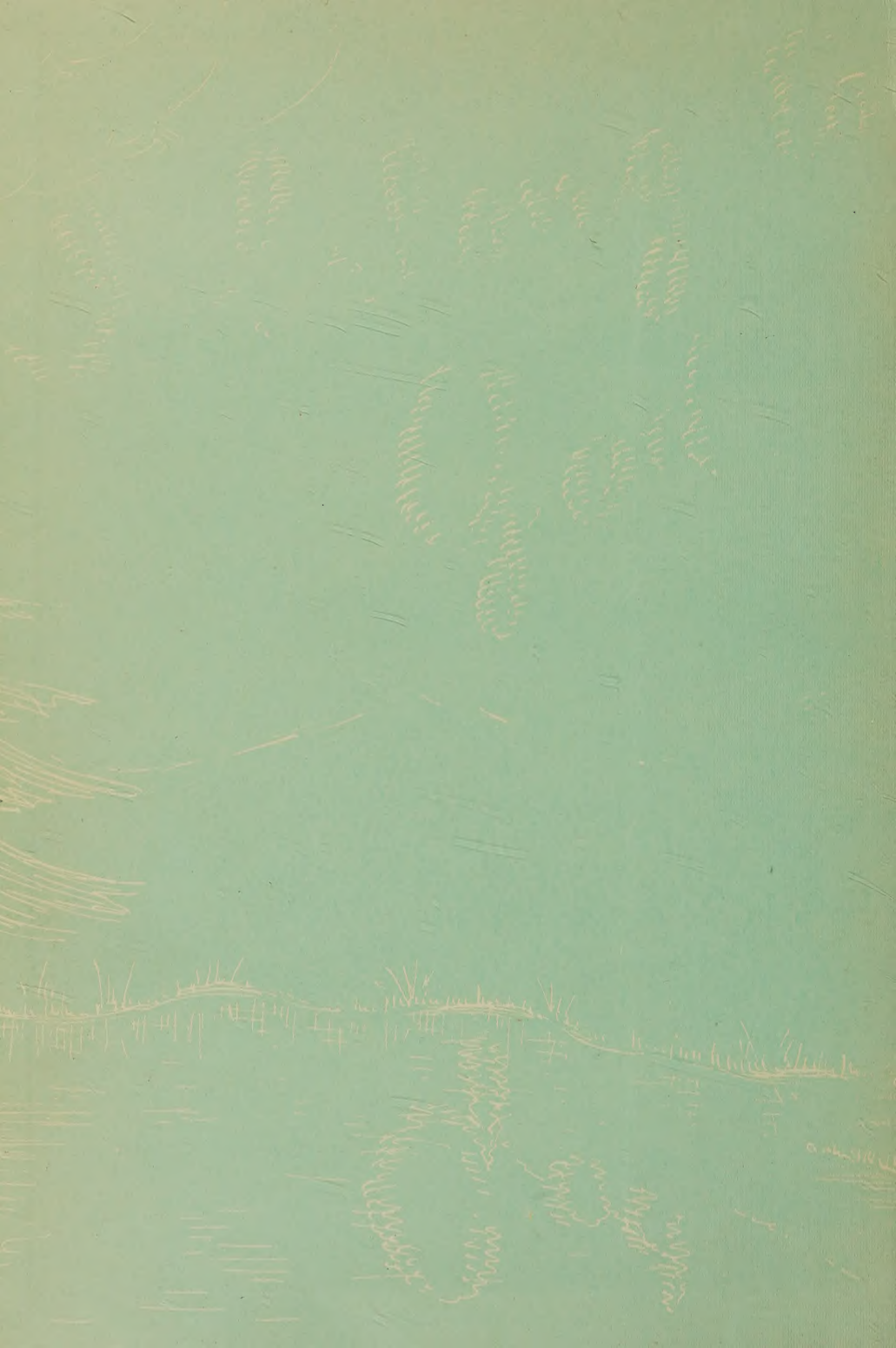
I BELONG TO GOD

LILLIAN CLARK



I BELONG TO GOD

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO
TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON
210 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, E C 4, LONDON
53 NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY
6 OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA
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I BELONG TO GOD

GREAT TRUTHS IN SIMPLE STORIES FOR CHILDREN AND THE LOVERS OF CHILDREN

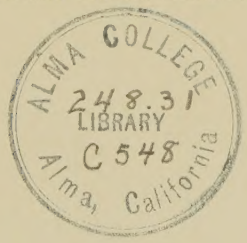
BY

LILLIAN CLARK

AS A SERIES THESE STORY-MEDITATIONS WILL FORM A THREE-DAY RETREAT

DRAWINGS BY

CLAIRE ARMSTRONG



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
NEW YORK · LONDON · TORONTO
1928

48266

CLARK

I BELONG TO GOD

Nihil Obstat: ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D., *Censor Librorum*

Imprimatur: ✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES, *Archbishop, New York*

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 21, 1927

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First Edition May 1928
Reprinted October 1928

MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

LOVINGLY DEDICATED

TO

OUR LADY OF THE CENACLE

AND

THE DEAR MOTHER OF US ALL

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CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
452 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK

May Our Blessed Lord, the Supreme Teacher and Lover of children, become "the way, the truth, and the life" to the little ones who will be fortunate enough to read and study this practical and attractive book, that they may thus learn to know Him better, serve Him more faithfully, and love Him more ardently, all the days of their lives.

P. Card. Hayes
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

March 31, 1928

FOREWORD

FOR more reasons than one, we of the older generation are often tempted to envy the younger. And our grudge against fate is based, at least in part, on the facilities for pleasant study which the children now enjoy. Maybe it was better for us to walk with less assistance and find by painful experience how steep is the path to knowledge and how rocky. Some pedagogues actually bid us so believe. In any event, ancient memories make us quick to appreciate and admire the new aids to learning created in these latter days by the combined skill of writer and artist and publisher, all bent on interesting and enlightening the child.

A delightful example of the new way of teaching old truth is this book which bears the happy title "I Belong to God." Here stories are told by one artist and illustrated by another. They are tales about the holiest things in all human experience, told to the loveliest of all beings in the

visible universe,—little children, come but now from God, who are opening their eyes wider and wider, day by day, to the mystery of life, to the meaning of sin and suffering and holiness.

If, as the saints believe, the guidance of souls may be called the art of arts, then to instruct newly made immortal spirits is the uttermost climax of all art. For who are these little ones, —children gathered about a mother's knee, children who throng upon the willing Christ, children at the First Communion rail, children playing along the paths of Paradise? They are the music and laughter and hope of an otherwise dead world. There could be no future were there no children, nor would there be a present worthy our interest. One does not picture Heaven without them; Hell is the place where they are not.

So the gentle lady who has written this book, —embracing in her motherhood the tens of thousands that will either read her stories or hear them told by other lips,—may rightly be glad in the consciousness of her very high vocation. The immortal bard whose voice still rings in human memory after the lapse of thrice a thou-

sand years, the carolling troubadour of long ago, have indeed a clear title to glory and a sort of human blessedness. But more blessed by far is she who in this prosaic age, by means of the story-teller's cunning art, succeeds in revealing the mysteries of the Kingdom of God to the minds of little children.

Beautiful these stories are, but more than that, each of them conveys a precious truth. In this they might serve as a symbol of the Church's spirit. Beauty, indeed, she cherishes; but never for its own sake alone. She makes use of it to convey truth and even after she has imparted truth, she is not yet satisfied; it must become a saving truth for the healing of wounds, for the bringing of holiness. That which the Church achieves on a scale divinely large, each mother must attempt upon a lesser. Here you have the reason of this present book.

JOSEPH MCSORLEY

January 31, 1928

I glimpse visions of halos above them.

DEAR FATHERS AND MOTHERS, AUNTS, UNCLES AND OTHERS:

For each precious child God has given
I have written these pages (it's taken me ages)
Tracing, gladly, their way back to Heaven.

I know legions of girls, I know armies of boys—
Little Children of Mary — I love them.
And beyond in God's blue (all their frolics in view)
I glimpse visions of halos above them.

Their wee faults I know well (have no fear, I shan't tell)
But I do speak of things to their credit,
And I'd need much more grace—and the printer more space
All their virtues and fine deeds to edit.

Said one of them on a fair day when grace was making itself heard, "I am going to ask Our Lord to make me tall, and a fine athlete, and a broker in Wall Street like my father; and to help me steer clear of mortal sin, and always to

stand up for religion." (His name is Jesse—his sister, Jane, you will meet in a chapter, and Kind-heart Jack, his brother.)

I pray God to grant his prayer, and how happy I shall be if, under His blessing, this little book helps to uncover for our children a bit more of the interesting and wondrous truths of their catechism. Happy and blessed if it should help Jesse and other children of God, even ever so little, to become better athletes—athletes of Christ. Help them to grow tall in reaching for RIGHT, to grow strong in doing it, brokers in grace, always to be on the lookout to keep free from sin, and everywhere to STAND UP FOR RELIGION.

THE AUTHOR

ONE

I BELONG TO GOD

(GOD CREATING: GOD REDEEMING)

I BELONG TO GOD

I BELONG TO GOD

(GOD CREATING: GOD REDEEMING)

TO-DAY you are going to ask yourself a new question. Say once, twice, three times: "Do I belong to myself?" Ask it once more with your eyes closed: *"Do I Belong to Myself?"* My! but that is queer! . . . "Do I belong to myself?" . . . Yes, it is queer. It makes you feel like rubbing your eyes a bit; you want to look around cautiously, and you hope someone is near . . . and sure enough here am I—but let us see about it together.

Let Us Imagine That—

All night long the snow has been steadily falling and covering everything with "a silence deep and white," and to-day is a holiday—how glorious!! You dress in a flash; your breakfast is hardly more than a pause on your way to the door—and out you go into the garden. "Gee, this *is* great," you say to yourself, "packs fine." Then an idea comes into your mind.

You work away quickly and noiselessly. Balls are rolled, balls are shaped and at the end of a happy morning you are not alone in the garden. I see standing beside you a portly *Figure in White*. . . . A motionless, silent man is reflecting your pleasure in a broad, merry and unchanging smile. Snow-birds stop their rapid flights, and resting on a branch of a nearby tree, admire your work. You *do* looked pleased and you have certainly made a splendid snow-man.

Presently you are joined by your playmates and I hear you say, "Isn't he great!" And then . . . "Say, look out, he's mine. . . . Look what you're doing, he belongs to me. I *made* him." . . . You have grown fond of him as you worked over him, and you are quite right, yes,

quite right in saying "He is mine," because the work of your hands *is* your own and you can honestly say, "I made him, he belongs to me."

[Keep "*I made* him—he belongs to me—he is mine" in the back of your mind for a time and we shall consider another picture.]

This morning—

On your way to school you bought a new ball. It is springtime and the air is thrilling with the twittering of the birds, and the lightness of your heart is in accord with the gladness of the morning. Of course, the ball is to remain out of sight until *Three P. M.* You work earnestly trying not to hear the distracting chirpings coming in through the open windows, trying hard, too, to stay put at your books for the year-end exams are coming. You keep at it even though you get the scent of peach and apple blossoms, and can almost hear the new grass growing and the gentle swaying of the ripening grains.

At last the day is finished and the lines are forming for dismissal. Blessed three o'clock! "Is there any hour quite like three o'clock?" you

are thinking when you are roused by the teacher's voice. "Who owns this ball? It was found in the aisle." "Oh," you say, darting forward, "that is mine. I bought it this morning." Of course it is restored to you at once for it is quite true that what you *buy* belongs to you.

[Keep also in your mind—"What I *buy* belongs to me. It is mine."]

And now again—

It is a balmy autumn day and the dog your father *gave* you for your birthday, is romping on the lawn in the long shadows of the late afternoon sun. A friend comes to visit you and you say, "Oh, come along, you must see my new dog." "Rex, Rex," you call, "is he not a beauty?" He comes to you with a bound and as you stroke his tan coat you say, "He's mine, all mine. Is he not a great birthday gift?"

[Keep this too: "What is *given* to me belongs to me. It is mine."]

Now let us get back to our question. Can you say really and honestly "I belong to my-

self"? Be fair. "W-e-l-l, I belong to myself *if* I can say I *made* myself, I *bought* myself, I *gave* me myself—" Yes, can you say it?

Can a person *make* himself? . . . Men can make wonderful things—pictures that move and ships that sail in the air, but can a man make

himself? . . . No, *no* man can make anything that has life in it, not even a blade of grass.

Can a person *buy* himself, or can a person be the *gift* of any one on this earth? . . . No, these things are impossible. Then *you* did not make yourself, nor buy yourself nor were you your own gift. So you do not belong to *yourself,* nor do you belong to any one in *this* world.

"Who then owns me, do I belong to no one, am

I a lost child?" No, there is *Some one* to whom you belong and not only in one of these ways but in all three and that *Some one* is the great GOD. Yes, this *is* so, and it is very, very wonderful. . . . The work of His Hands is surely His . . . You had snow to start with, *but He has made everything and everybody in the wide, wide world out of nothing*—even you and me.

Have you never seen men in large cities flying along high above your head on a cloudless day writing signs across the blue sky in fluffy, white rope-letters that you easily read from the ground? How fitting if they should write in the Heavens I BELONG TO GOD . . . and not only there but swing these popcorn rope-letters over trees and lands and seas and fields—across everything in this marvellous world—having everything proudly repeating these blessed words—"I belong to God."

"Did God make Himself, too?" Ah no, *He* was never made. Do you not remember the catechism says, "God had no beginning. He always was and always will be"?—Jane will help us here.

She had come to the convent with her brothers, Jesse and Jack, to stay for a three days' retreat for First Communion. They were earnestly trying to prepare themselves for the great day when Our Lord would come into their hearts for the first time, and they had had many periods of silence in the chapel to think over what they would say to the dear God when He was really the Guest of their hearts.

Finally the evening before the eventful day had arrived, and all was ready. Quite angel-like—snow-white souls and yearning hearts—they were seated quietly on the lawn for a last talk before bedtime when Sister asked, "Jane, what are you going to say to Our Lord when He comes to-morrow?" Jane moved out to the edge of the garden seat, as she always did when she had something important to say, and sitting as straight as an Indian, she began: "I am going to ask Him (her clear voice quivered slightly with emotion, but she did not hesitate a second), "I am going to ask Him *where* He was when He had that first beginning. . . ." It was a prepared question. Sister, as well as the boys, felt

it was an awe-inspiring moment. Jane was just six, and the child's soul was in her eyes, where a little mist of pain had gathered, her earnestness was so intense.

Sister was the first to speak. "Do you remember what the catechism says about that, Jane?" (That lesson had been studied six months ago but Jane had a splendid mind.) "Yes," quickly, "but He *must* have had a beginning—everything has."

"In His human nature, yes," Sister softly replied. "He had His beginning in His human nature on that blessed day when the Angel Gabriel announced to the little Virgin Mary that she could be the dear Mother of God, and then came the wonderful moment at last, when, as every other little one, the Infant-God was lying in the arms of His blessed Mother.—You have seen Him, dear, in the Stable of Bethlehem—the lovely, wee, Babe—our precious, tiny Baby-Brother.

"But Jane," Sister continued, "in His Divine Nature, he never had a beginning—never, no—never. It is one of God's privileges and we do

believe it. We cannot easily understand it—but it is true—God had no beginning."

"Then . . . then," said Jane, "I shall ask Him to tell me, please, *how* it could be"—this with a weary little sigh . . . a sigh in which the awful torment of days, perhaps months, seemed to escape. Jane is a philosopher.

But we have wandered—

Besides *making* you, God *bought* you from the dreadful slavery of Satan by paying for you with the Precious Blood of His Own Beloved Son. And still more, on the day when you were christened you were *given* to Him by the words spoken by your God-father and God-mother . . . you are His Gift. . . . That day He reached out eagerly and lovingly to receive you, and He folded you closely to His Heart as soon as the cleansing waters of Baptism made your soul beautiful, and pure, and radiant with grace. Right then God became your very own *Father* and you His little *child*. How very, very wonderful!

Do I belong to myself? . . . *Goodness, no.* I should say not.

GOD'S THREE-TIMES RIGHT

Do I belong to myself? Goodness no. God made me—
He bought me—I am His gift, His little child.

I BELONG TO GOD:
HE MADE ME;
HE BOUGHT ME;
I AM HIS GIFT—His little child.

Oh, my God, I believe I came from You and I am going back to You fast. . . . While I was a baby I could not understand these mighty truths, but I am a baby no longer.

NOW LET US SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO BELONG TO GOD. Well . . . if your snowman could move or walk, or could work and think and love, you would, of course, expect him to stay near you and work with you and help you. And you would expect him to love you and I am sure he would, for he would not be a snowman but for you.

Oh, my Father, I understand. I CAN *move and walk and work and think and love, and I must be very glad to do all these things for the God who made and owns me. Almighty God, You have a three-times right to expect me to please you.—To know You, to love You, to serve you . . . this is why I am here.*

I BELONG TO GOD

To know and love and serve You, Lord,
And Your Will alone to do,
Then safely to rest, Father, in Your hands
Knowing I belong to You.

Oh, my God, how sweet it is to know I belong to You. If I belonged to any one on this earth some day I should be left alone, but You will always be in Your lovely Home up there guarding me, and guiding me, and waiting for me. Your loving Heart is ever the same yesterday, to-day and forever more. Help me each day, my dearest Father, to be your good child—knowing You better, loving You better, serving and pleasing You always better.

(Now, happy child of God, close your eyes, and speak to Him as simply as you do to your mother or to your little friends. Speak to Him very lovingly, and very sweetly, and very earnestly, and thank Him again and again for the grace of belonging to Him. Say everything that is in your heart and at the end say the *Our Father*.)

TWO

I AM THE TEMPLE OF GOD

(GOD IN MY SOUL)

I am God's locket—His Temple—God lives in my soul

TWO

I AM THE TEMPLE OF GOD

(GOD IN MY SOUL)

CHARLOTTE, a little girl of five, is going to help to-day to make you understand what it means when you say, *"I Am The Temple Of God."*

Last year she spent the Christmas Holidays with her aunt who lives in a beautiful house set in the midst of a garden-forest of majestic trees. The little visitor was very welcome, for that household had no children of its own, and her auntie loved her dearly and planned every sort of thing to make her visit pleasant. Coasting and sliding and driving and books and dolls and even Christmas parties, besides games of every kind, and Charlotte had a happy, happy time indeed.

But shall I tell you where you would find her when the rising moon was veiling the virgin

snow with its silver sheen? Shall I tell you the thing she loved best in this house of her fairy god-mother? It was her aunt's jewel-box. At bedtime the child would climb into her aunt's lap, and while she listened to pretty stories of the dear Christ-child, stories of the angels singing in the sky, of the watching shepherds and of the Christmas star, she would pick up one by one the pretty chains and golden rings and sparkling gems, and as her aunt looked on with watchful eye, she would let them fall through her little fingers upon the lovely velvet of the box. She loved to see them shine, and gleam, and make pretty colors in the bright light, and she pretended that they were the wise men's gifts to Bethlehem's little King.

"Auntie, of all your jewels which do you like best?" she asked one evening, and her aunt, with a sweet, thinking look, and a warm kiss, answered softly, "This one, dear," and drew out from the lace at her throat, a silken bag. The child's eyes grew big with wonder as she watched her Aunt's fingers untie it and take from it a locket no bigger than a penny. "I love this

locket best," she said. "I had it made just so." "Why, auntie?" "Because—because it holds the picture of my boy who is with dear Jesus in Paradise." She bravely opened it and looking sweetly out at them was a darling baby face with oh, such a sunny smile and hair all curls and rings. "Did he look as lovely as that, Auntie?" the child asked as she fondly held him in a tight embrace. *"Yes, It Is A Perfect Likeness, It Is His Very Image,* and because I love it so I keep it safely hidden away in this costly locket. I had it made of richest gold and circled round with purest pearls. Protected in this bag, it is safe from every spot and stain. Nothing must dim or mar its golden beauty, because *it is my dear boy's little house—his little temple."*

They sat for some time quietly musing and drinking in that ravishing breath of Heaven. Then Charlotte, returning the smile of the angel-face, fell quietly asleep in Auntie's arms.

While Charlotte slumbers, let us put her, auntie, and baby, gently out of our minds. Now turn your thoughts to yourself and think, *"Suppose* one day as I kneel all alone praying in my

room, I should receive an angel's visit, and he should say to me, 'The good God you pray to loves you dearly. He loves you so dearly, indeed, that He has sent me with this gift to you, *it is his own true picture.*' 'For me . . . God's own picture for me?' you would stammer, and then, little wondering tears of joy and love would steal into your eyes and you would hardly dare to look upon His Holy Face. . . . Your heart would melt within you as the angelic messenger continues, "Lovers of God, good men and women, have painted pictures of Him and put them into churches and holy books, but these are only make-believe pictures. No one before has ever had His picture really—*behold now it is yours.*"

As the lady did, would you not seek the richest of rich lockets, and would you not wear it round your neck in a strong bag of purest silk? . . . Surely, you would. "Nothing must spot or mar or even touch it; it is God's locket," you would say, and with your eyes closed you would think of the dear Face within, and morning, and evening and all through the day, you would

whisper words of honeyed love, and little prayers of thanks.

Suppose, you said, but need you be supposing? A greater thing than this has really happened. Listen—*"I am God's Locket,"* you can say, and say too, *"my very body is His House —His Temple."*

Oh! whisper it and say it very, very, softly . . . "Since my Baptism *I Have Carried In My Soul God's Very Likeness, His Real Image.* Yes, even more (dare I say it) the LIVING, LOVING GOD LIVES THERE."

As the ringing of the little bell at Holy Mass announces the coming of Our Lord upon the altar, so the beatings of my heart are as sweet, low tinklings proclaiming He is within. . . . Not now and then, but all through the busy hours of the day and through the dreamings of the silences of night—my Lord is in my soul. Like our First Parents in the garden, I am daily walking in the Presence of my God, and my guardian angel ever close beside me is always looking within me, adoring and loving *Him* there.

Oh, it is wonderful! I shall never be fright-

ened again when I am left alone, for *alone* is no more. . . . God is ever my silent guest . . . how sweet! . . . how merciful and consoling!

For His dear sake what care I must take of my body—His temple. I must be free from every spot and stain of horrid sin. *No careless looks, no evil words, no wicked acts.* "Hands off, I am God's temple," I shall say. All girls and boys are His temples, too, and we must be just so. Like a faithful soldier I must guard my temple well. If free from sin it will be a house of purest *gold.*

And pearls? Where shall I gather them? I know. I know the pearls that He loves best. And not only a little circle shall He have but my temple must be covered everywhere with them. Kind acts, sweet thoughts—these are *pearls.* Cheerfully to help my tired Mother; sweetly to give up to sister or brother the game or candy I so badly want; often to turn my thoughts within and softly whisper, "Dear God, I love You best;" "Dear God, stay with me always;" to forget myself; to think of Him and others. These are the pearls He loves so well and begin-

ning right away, each day, I must put a new one in my locket.

> Tower of Ivory, House of Gold
> Help me all-holy to be,
> Sinless and faultless—a temple all-fair
> For the dear God Who dwells in me.

How good You are, my God, and what wonderful things Your great love makes You think of! No more need I stretch out my thoughts in prayer way up to You in Heaven but like Mary and Joseph I find You in the temple—my temple. Quietly closing my eyes I can bow my head and gently look within me into your dear Face. . . . Look into Your Face fairer and sweeter and more tender and loving even than my own dear Mother's.

I love to have You there, and I love to say, "God Is In My Soul—I Am The Temple Of God"—I want to sing this all day long.

Oh, dearest Lord and dearest Lover of me, can I ever think of anything else? Oh, help me to keep this temple sweet and pure. . . . Dear Father, I HAVE *said, "I Belong To God" and*

NOW *with You living in my soul, can I not say, "My God Belongs To Me"?*

(Close your eyes, dear Child—dear little temple of God—and kneel at Jesus' feet, talk to Him, thank Him, love Him, and at the end of all, say the Our Father.)

THREE

WHEN THE CHILDREN OF MEN GO MAD

(SIN)

THREE

WHEN THE CHILDREN OF MEN GO MAD

(SIN)

I KNOW *meditating* means thinking especially of things, but how strange! Am I to think especially to-day of *sin?* I thought it was not a nice thing to do, and why should I think so about it? I hate it and— Ah! that is it, do you really hate sin and do you hate the place into which it can draw you? . . . *Draw me?* . . . Can sin draw *me* anywhere? It takes powerful steam engines and electricity to pull me along. I am pretty big, *can sin draw me?*—This is our question to-day—

LET US SEE JUST HOW STRONG SIN IS.

Let us pretend that you and I are fairies and that we lived long, long ago before God had made the world or any man or woman or little child at all, when He had made no one but the angels. God was living all alone in His Heaven and the angels were not yet there but were waiting, still waiting just outside, hoping and longing for the minute to go through the pearly gates into the arms of the Father who made them and who loved them so dearly. You know, of course, that when God made the angels they had to prove their right to live in heaven. Let us pretend, even, that we have been invited to the—

—FIRST TEST—The Angel's Test—

Do you know what *tests* are? Certainly you do, you take them at the close of the year to see if you are ready to pass into a higher grade.

So, let us pretend, you and I, that we have gone up, up so very high, up to the highest Heavens, and are sitting in our fairy swing ravished and

THE FIRST TEST

. . . quickly the answer came . . . the good We Wills pass in . . . but—Oh wait!

enchanted, and transported out of ourselves, enfolded in the mysterious beauty of creation's fair dawn. We are seated far above the angels' heads, or shall we say wings, and we shall watch their test. We shall see if they are ready; we shall see if they will pass . . . pass higher . . . pass through those lovely gates into the embrace of their waiting Father. . . . My, how beautiful! . . . The sight almost blinds us with its utter light. Look at the multitude of ravishing spirits—God's radiant, grace-glowing angels. Our hearts flutter with gladness, they are so lovely. It is like watching thousands and thousands of sparkling diamonds or dancing sunbeams, or like the shinings and gleamings of thousands and thousands of sunlit crystals. It is like looking into an endless garden of spotless, white lilies, so pure are these angels; it is as though all the soft and flaming sunsets, all the rosy tints and amber hues that ever could be, were gathered in one place, so warm and ardent and loving are their hearts. And my! but they are happy . . . they dream of heaven, and they long for God. They know the gates are soon to

open and they know their thrones are waiting for them. . . . But hush! the *test* begins. All are listening—God Himself gives it—just one question, one simple favor—ONE ONLY SERVICE HE ASKS. An awful moment passes. . . . All is silent.

Quickly the test is done, quickly the answers come. *"We will,"* and *"We will not,"* we hear them say. But what is the disorder—something is happening—THE ANGELS ARE DIVIDING—see, the grand leaders spring forth and line the angels up. . . . A struggle? . . . How awful! Can it be the angels are in battle? . . . Look close. . . . The good *"We wills"* drive back the *"We will nots."* Look, look, oh look! the gates are open. THE FAITHFUL ONES PASS IN . . . songs of love are bursting from their lips. Oh, good! *they've passed the test.*

But the gates! the gates! they're closing . . . all are not in. . . . Oh, wait, wait! Oh, hurry . . . ! Mercy, can some have failed . . . ? We are afraid to look. . . . Ah, yes, the *"We will nots"*—their thrones are lost; they've lost their

Father—His care, His love, never will they see His Face.

Oh sad, sad day—Oh day of darksome horror! . . . *Not Children Now But Strangers Evermore.*

The beauty around us has suddenly vanished —something seems to be slipping . . . the glorious light is fading . . . shadows are falling . . . the Heavens are topsy-turvy, and there is no Mother Mary to call upon . . . we scarce can see. Quick as a flash they change . . . look, look, *our once lovely angels*—they seem *withered—crooked—twisted—bent—and ugly.* Quick as a flash they stir . . . they move . . . oh dreadful! dreadful! *Angels in ruins—Everlasting Cinders Now, Like Angry Streaks They Fall.* We dare not look. Our hands cover our eyes. . . . Where, where will they stop . . . ? You know where. . . . *You Know Where The Bad Angels Went Forever—Forevermore.*

"What drew them there?" you answer. Was it electricity? or steam? Ah no,—*Sin, Only Sin, Can Change God's Angels Into Devils And Send Them Hurling Into Hell.*

—*THE SECOND TEST*—

Now let us leave our fairy swing (but we are fairies still, let us pretend) and we are invited to the *second test*. Where will this be? Think hard. . . . Who took it? You know—Adam and Eve, so it will be in the Garden of Eden, of course. We shall watch this time from our gossamer nest in the top of a towering tree. . . .

How beautiful the world is, fresh from the hand of God. . . . We sit wrapped in the magic mists of early morning, and we see the day blossom forth like a perfect flower. No dust nor frost has come to spoil its leaves and flowers; no bitter cold nor scorching heat, and of all the new and lovely earth the Garden of Eden is the fairest spot. Never were there such giant roses, never were shy violets sweeter. The leaves are like finest lace—the fruits here are like sugar and rich honey. We hear the musical murmur of the rippling waters; we see the starry eyes of a thousand delicate blossoms, and the lively plumage of the feathered citizens of cloud-topped trees and lowly shrubs. The garden is dancing in a shower of beauty and color and

perfume, and into this heaven on earth *God put two people—our first parents.*

Of all the lovely things there, they are the fairest—fair with the blush of grace. Fairest, because *their souls possess God's most precious gift,—His Own Very Life. The very blaze of His own beauty is shining within them.*

The Garden is theirs to do with as they please. . . . My! but they are happy. Calm minds, so clear and peaceful, and hearts bursting with ardent love. No pain; no sorrow; no war; no study; no sickness; no, *not even death* for when their life on earth is finished, God means to call them home and they are to rise gently up to heaven just as they are.

And oh! how sweet. Toward evening God comes Himself and walks with them as the sun sets and the dew falls. We can almost imagine we hear them saying, "How good it is to have You, dearest Lord. You are so kind, our hearts are filled with bliss and burn with warmest love for You." And then His answer— "It is all yours—animals, flowers, fruits, everything—use it as you wish, but just one little thing I ask, *one*

act to prove your love." They are listening carefully. "Do not eat the fruit of that tree growing there in the centre of the Garden."—This is their test. . . . How easy . . . ! They'll pass, heaven is sure to be theirs.

But alas! Who is crawling in under the trees? Who indeed?—The serpent, the devil, the leader of the fallen angels. He is so angry with himself, so jealous of Adam and Eve, and so afraid they will have his lost throne. See, he is speaking to Eve. . . . Oh! hear the lies he tells her. . . . Hear him coaxing, tempting her.

O Mother Eve, do not listen, run, run away and say a little prayer and God will set all right. Oh, do not stay. Must God be disappointed again? Will He lose these two lovely creatures as He lost the angels? Goodness, she is listening; she is answering. . . . How dreadful! she believes his lie. . . . Worse and worse . . . she eats the fruit—and so, alas, does Adam.

The test is done. *THEY'VE FAILED.* Our hearts are turning sick. Will *they* change too? The sting of shame leaps into their guilty hearts. Oh, see it cover their cheeks with its

blush . . . it sends the smile from their lips . . . the light from their eyes—*their once blissful hearts are breaking.* They run; they hide . . . like the bad angels they've lost their thrones.

Heaven is closed, and their beautiful souls have become (dare I say it?) a place of death, yes, of fearful death—*they have killed God's Life there.*

Ah, how heart-sick they feel! . . . Out from the garden of pleasure, see God's angels driving them. Strangers are they—no more His children. See now what enters into their lives. . . . Like mad, angry dogs breaking their chains, see suffering—pain—grief—sadness—war—parting—weakness—darkness and every other misery bursting into their lives. Thorns, thistles and nettles crush out the fair flowers; weary days of toil and work begin, and at the end will come chilly death. . . . This is now their lot.

SO THE SECOND TEST ENDS. WHAT MADE IT A FAILURE? ELECTRICITY? STEAM? YOU 'ANSWER, NO, ONLY CRUEL, MIGHTY SIN COULD CHANGE THE WORLD LIKE THAT.

Now forget that you were playing fairies and remember yourself, just as you are. Do you still think that you are too big for sin to draw you? "No, no," you quickly say, "the angels and Adam and Eve were stronger than I am and if sin did such frightful things to them, oh, what can it not do to little me? I am afraid. I have committed sins, maybe big ones. Is my soul dark and lifeless like theirs?

Have I, O my Father, crushed Your very Life out of my temple? Have I cut myself off from You? Are You angry with me? Have You turned Your Holy Face from me? Have I lost my throne too, and is Heaven closed to me?

Well, certainly, if you have sinned deeply, it is.

Think hard. Look deep down into your heart and as far back into your life as you can. Since you were a little one, what has been wrong? (Go slowly now)—at home . . . visiting . . . at church, forgetting Our Lord and talking . . . in the dining room, pantry, school-room, bedroom. Looking about saying your prayers or missing them; disobeying; lying; stealing;

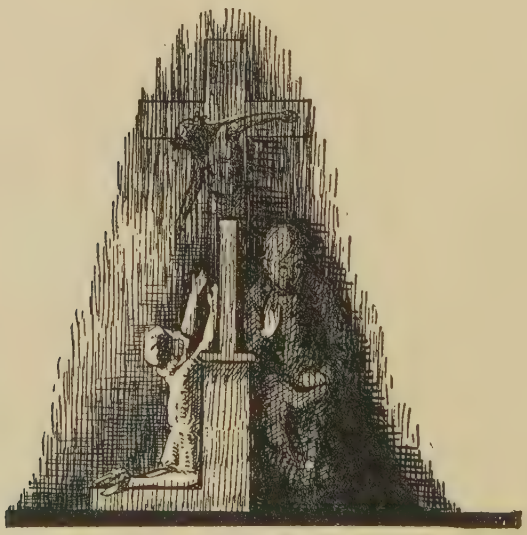
cheating in school; quarrelling; hitting; being angry; answering back; saying naughty words; doing bad things; eating meat on Fridays; missing Holy Mass and being late—and all the rest. Oh, if you could see what is written against you in Heaven from your first sin until now. . . ! How you should hate to have your Mother or your playmate see that list, and—are you not ashamed?—God sees it and His loving heart grows sad. The dear Virgin Mother Mary, too, has to turn her pure loving eyes away from your much-stained soul. Do you not hang your head in shame? *"Yes, I am ashamed . . . what shall I do?"* You know. . . . You know what you should do . . . you know you have what the angels and Adam and Eve did not have.

Yes, sweet Jesus, I know. I know I have YOUR CHURCH, YOUR PRIESTS, YOUR SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, YOUR CONFESSION. I know You bought these for me by Your bitter passion and heavy Cross. I know that the night before Your cruel death You went into a mountain and all alone asked Your heavenly Father to

let You take my sins upon You, and I know that they covered Your pure soul, and I know too, that they were so heavy, and so many, that they threw You to the ground in a great agony of pain and misery. I know that You did all this because You love me, and that IT IS IN YOUR PRECIOUS BLOOD THAT MY DARKENED, SPOTTED SOUL WILL BE BATHED IN CONFESSION AND MY SINS WASHED AWAY. I shall be whiter than snow.

'Ah, Jesus, I was the sinner, but You did the suffering. I know in confession I shall kneel at Your side with Your arm about me and Your dear head bent low to forgive me as soon as I say I am really sorry. O, help me with Your light; help me to be very, very sorry; help me to hate bad, WICKED SIN *and never to forget that it* IS THE STRONGEST AND MOST TERRIBLE THING IN THIS WORLD, *but help me still more to remember that You alone are stronger; that if I ask You, You will save me, for* "SAVIOUR" *means to save and You are my Saviour.*

(Now, my dear, be very silent and loving; ask your dear Mother Mary to help you to think of your sins and to make you very sorry because they pain Jesus. Ask Him to help you to hate sin more and more each day. Always remember in confession if something troubles you to put it first and to say right off, "Father, I have something that is hard to say," and then the priest will help you and everything will be well. . . . Now a loving act of contrition and the *Our Father* and, *O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee.)*



FOUR

YOU DO SOME CHOOSING

(HELL)

. . never to go to Heaven: never to see the smile of God: never to see the sweet face of the Virgin-Mother

FOUR

YOU DO SOME CHOOSING

(HELL)

HELL! Goodness, is not that a swear word and is it not sinful to say it? No, not always. It is sinful only when angry men use it to mean something wicked. Oftentimes to say it is bad manners, but it is quite right to use it as we do to-day and speak of it as we speak of places and countries. In your geography you study about Canada and Europe and hear of people visiting them, and just so we may study about Hell, but—there is no *visiting* there—alas! *people who journey to Hell stay on forever.*

A gentleman last May decided to buy a new summer-home to take his family into the country for the whole vacation time. The children were all excited. "Oh goody," they said, "Where is it to be, Daddy?" "Either Rosedale or Highland," he answered, "I cannot tell which until I find out something more about each place—

what kind of scenery, fishing, driving, bathing, what sort of people, and what they do all day."

Now child, you know that at the end of your life you, too, are going off into a new country, and like the gentleman you must choose between two places, and like him also you should spend some time in finding out about each. And, *how important it is,* for when you go you are to stay, not three or four months only, but for *millions and millions of years,* that is,—*forever.*

"Oh," you answer, "I know what you mean. You mean I am to choose between Heaven and Hell. That is very easy. I do not need to think about that a minute, for who would ever choose Hell?" No one, of course. *No, no one ever really meant to choose Hell, and yet how is it there are people there?* Maybe we can find our answer in this remark of a little six-year-old. She said one day: "I am sure there are more people in Hell than in Heaven." "Why, Helen?" she was asked. "Because—because bad is easier than good." And so it is. To keep, therefore, from doing the *bad* which is

very easy and to force ourselves to do the *good* even when it is hard, we should have deep down in our minds a clear picture of fearful, frightful, awful Hell, and we should look at it when we find ourselves slipping and almost giving in.

TO-DAY, THEN, WE SHALL STUDY HELL—and I think a story of a really, truly boy named Georgie will help us. He was a brown-eyed, rosy-cheeked little fellow of two summers and he lived a few steps away from a convent chapel. Each evening as the shadows began to fall and bedtime drew near, his nurse brought him there to say his little prayers and it was sweet to see the tiny mite not stopping till at the railing, close to his Jesus, he would lisp a loving *good-night.* Then, turning each time, the baby feet would patter softly to our Lady's altar for a second *good-night,* and to ask the care and love of his dear Mother Mary.

With Christmas, of course, came the little Manger and its precious Infant, and then the visits grew longer and nurse must hold him close to the little crib. Bending near he would softly

call "Babee" and "Jesus" and say funny little words besides—sweetest words that only babies know—and which I am very sure the Christ-child understood.

After nurse he would repeat—

Were I to hold You, Baby-God
I'd whisper in Your ear
How much I love You—then some things,
For only You to hear.

Then would come a loving good-night kiss right on the dear Infant's curls and little George would go away sweetly crowing with joy.

One by one the holidays slipped by and he came, impatient as ever, his eager baby feet

hurrying to the crib, running on ahead of nurse, calling, "Babee-Babee." But lo, at last Christmas time was over and the little Manger was gone. This evening he looked—he stopped—he looked again. He was puzzled. "Babee" he called. . . . "Babee," again and again, and then down, down on hands and knees searching with wide, round, wondering eyes—searching everywhere—ceiling, floor and walls. Rising slowly "Babee," and "gone" he whispered plaintively. His eyes, like twin moons in a sky of pale rose, clouded with sudden pain, and nurse quickly folding him in her arms, carried him off, as little sobs and big round tears and smothered cries told how he missed his little Friend.

Several Years Pass. Our little man is now a boy of six. It is the year of his First Holy Communion and every Sunday brings him with loving heart and shining eyes to receive his well-loved Jesus. We see him as before coming daily to the chapel for his good-night prayer —but Mother now has taken nurse's place.

Good Friday comes, and let us watch them this evening as they walk silently in and with soft

step pass towards the railing. The quick, loving eyes of the child tell him at once something is missing. "Mamma, the little light is out," he whispers. "Yes, dear," his Mother says, and drawing him closer goes on with her prayers. How strange that Mamma does not seem disturbed, he thinks—I guess she did not hear me. "Mamma, the little light is out," he says again, "and Oh, Mamma, the little door is open." "Yes, dear, Jesus is not there." "Not there, Mamma?" he says with a little quiver looking towards the altar. "No, my little son, this is the day bad, wicked men took Jesus off and killed Him." An ache springs into the child's heart, and pain flashes into his eyes as he searches his Mother's face, then bursting into sobs, he buries his head in the deep fur of her coat. Just as in his baby days, he is taken out sobbing and weeping. Try as she can, his Mother fails to comfort him, and it is only sleep that ends his flood of tears. But his heartache is not ended, and often through the night little sighs and troubled words escape his lips just as before, and

"Babee"; and *"gone"*; and *"No Jesus Sunday"* they hear him say.

Now, little reader, did you never miss Jesus like that on Good Friday? Did you never think that on that day in all the churches the world over, the little red lights are out and the little tabernacle doors are open and the Jesus Whom you love to have on the altar is gone? No? Well, think of it now for a while. . . . Imagine this to be Good Friday and think that you are where you love to go to Holy Mass on Sunday, or in the convent chapel where you sometimes go for visits. . . . Pretend that the little light is out and the door open, telling you Jesus is not there. . . . Then let your mind travel from city to city, and from church to church in every country without finding *one* red light burning and seeing all the little open doors telling their sad story *Jesus is gone.*

[Keep this picture in your mind and stop reading and close your eyes and think deeply of it.]

Would not the Church be very cold and cheer-

less without Jesus? Does not your heart grow sad at the thought of a world without Him even for a day? Would you not ache all over and would not such a feeling of loneliness steal into your heart that you would hurry home to Mother for comfort and a warm embrace? Could you be happy and smile again until the priest had brought the dear Lord back in Holy Mass tomorrow?

But suppose something would keep the priest from saying Mass the next day and the next and and the next—how distressed and anxious you would become. And then if right away cruel war should carry off our priests and kill them *all* and none should be left to say the precious words to change the bread and wine—what would you do? Why you would weep and sigh and pine and almost die of grief, and forgetting all else you would call upon God to take you quickly from this chilly world; to take you away to Heaven to be again near Jesus. You would hurry by the churches, now so cold and empty . . . and you would meet sad faces and breaking

hearts at every turn, and earth would be a gloomy place. . . .

[Stop reading again and with closed eyes go over that picture.]

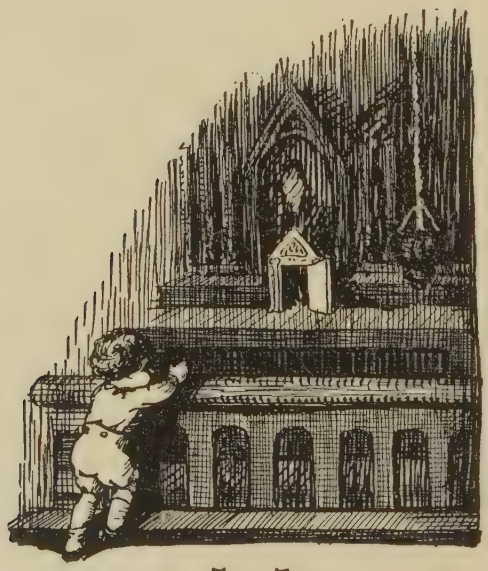
Now do some more *supposing*. Suppose from grieving and weeping like little George you should fall sobbing asleep. And in a dream should see one of God's beautiful angels passing over the troubled world as the angels did on the first Christmas night, but instead of a song of joy you should hear him saying, "Wicked world, because of your sins Jesus has left your altars, but think not to meet Him in Heaven, for I have come from God with this message— *'Heaven is closed as a book folded up and for you it shall never be opened.'*" Oh! how you would moan and toss in your sleep. How dark and fearful this thought would be—never to go to Heaven, never to see the smile of God, never to see the sweet face of the Virgin Mother; but instead to hear the demons of Hell shrieking bad words into your ears and laughing at you, right into your face for believing their lies and letting

them *draw* you into that *GODLESS* place . . .

[With your eyes closed think earnestly, child, of Hell as it is really is until you are are sure as sure can be that you will never, never choose it.]

Then say, *"My God and dearest Father, give me that love of You and great desire for You; and give me also that understanding and fear of Hell that will keep me always in Your grace.*

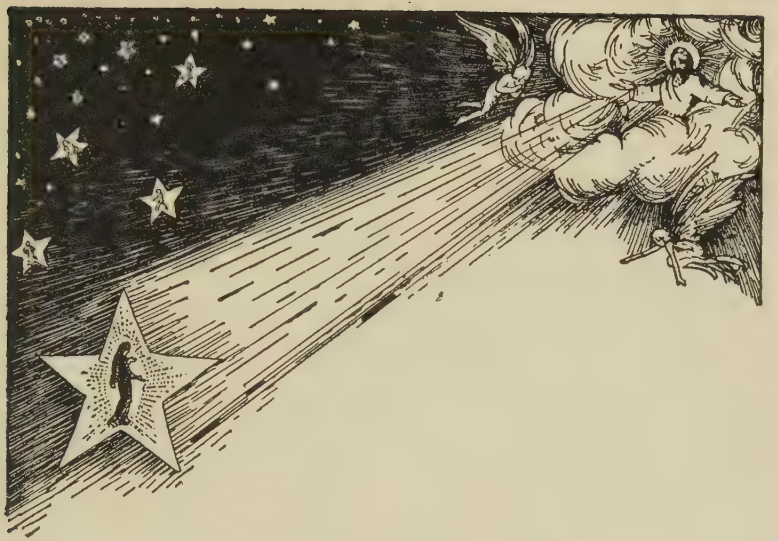
[Say all that is in your heart about it to Jesus—dear child, He is listening. Then end with a loving *Our Father.*]



FIVE

MISERS OR FIREFLIES—WHICH?

(GOING TO HEAVEN BY GRACE)



FIVE

MISERS OR FIREFLIES—WHICH?

(GOING TO HEAVEN BY GRACE)

GOING to Heaven by Grace . . . this is just lovely. I am glad that to-day I am to think about Heaven. I have chosen Heaven and I have made up my mind that it is to be my home when my life here is ended. . . . I simply love to think of it. I love to imagine that I can hear the angels laughter and their blissful songs, and I do want to find out the surest, safest way to reach it.

GOING TO HEAVEN BY GRACE!

Tell me, sweetest Jesus, what is *Grace?* If it is Grace that is to draw me to You, can I not begin this very day to get it? Please help me to know about it, and each day to have more and more.—

Well, let us go back in our thoughts to the time before the dear Son of God had come to earth to be the sweet little Lord Jesus of Bethlehem. That was long, long ago, even thousands of years.

In those days, God the Father from His Heavenly Home, was looking down with pity on our poor earth, and longing to send His Beloved Son to save it from rushing madly on in sin to hell. But, His Son must have a Mother, and who of all people was holy and pure and lovely enough for *that?* No one yet. But God, infinite and almighty, knows that such a Mother will one day be upon this earth—a fit and ready soul—the Virgin Immaculate.

From His Heavenly Home the earth is spread out before the Eternal Father as the vast, deep, open sky is above us when we stand on a high hill at twilight's hush, seeing nothing above us

but the soft, pretty, glimmering stars resting in its dark, deep blue. And our earth (God's sky—did you ever think of that?) is sparkling and dancing with stars for Him too. Can you guess what these stars are? (Not real ones, of course, but I think you can understand what I mean.) Oh! it is so sweet—they are the souls of His own dear creatures. "But do souls shine?" Yes—that is, they have their *spiritual shinings*. Once, you know, when Our Lord was on earth they said, "His Face did shine as the sun." In this way we can speak of souls shining. "But what makes them do it?" Read on a few moments longer and you shall know.

LET US GO BACK in imagination to the centuries before Our Saviour was born and let us watch the tender glance of the Almighty Father, as it travels lovingly from soul to soul, as a bee from blossom to blossom, ever waiting and waiting. He sees some souls as wee baby stars, faintly twinkling and blinking; others as larger ones and others larger still with a brighter, clearer light. Then sometimes God finds a soul so very, very beautiful—glowing so ardently—

but not yet, not yet; none perfect enough yet to be the holy Mother.

But,—*sweetness and hope!* At last one year, just when summer is melting away in the blue haze of autumn, and the mellow sun and the harvest moon take turns in caressing the fruit-laden earth, the All-Patient Father sees in the rich, quiet green of a rolling country, far, far from the noisy city, in the little village of Nazareth, a new soul—as a tiny star—shine suddenly forth. . . . Watch Him as He bends lovingly over it—the silence of the world of grace veiling the scene. . . .

In most ways this is much like other souls—other stars—but in two ways it is different. Shall I tell you how? Well, first, it delights to cover its lovely light from all but God and just to nestle like a shy whispering violet at His feet, in all its peaceful beauty—shining only for Him; . . . and besides, from the very beginning, it appeared each hour greater and lovelier. (All souls, you know, do not do this.)

Not many months had passed till it was much

more beautiful than souls much older, and the most wonderful thing about it was, that it was never at a standstill. . . . Never—no never—a ray less dim, but ever growing deeper—softer—clearer. . . . What pleasure God took in gazing down upon it; how it held His tenderest looks, and how its beauty caught the glances of all His fair angels! That little nook where it rested was the dearest place on earth to God, and that soul was its dearest treasure. It was His most precious pearl, glorious in His sight. . . . The angels wondered. . . . They loved the moon-kissed beauty of the midnight dew, they loved the joyous morning air when roses unfold and laughter fills the land, but never had they seen created beauty such as this.—Never before had they seen on earth so *heavenly* a soul.

"Could even an angel be purer?" they said. "What *does* it mean?" God soon answered them. He gathered them about Him and told them the great secret. The long-awaited soul had come; the perfect soul; the soul holier than angels even—*the soul fit to be God's Mother.*

They listened in a hush of ecstasy—and her name? Can you not tell it?—*The little Virgin Mary.*

TIME PASSED, and then calling to His side the great angel Gabriel, God sent him with a wonderful massage: "Would she like to be the Mother of His Son?" What a glorious invitation! Softly and swiftly through the starlit night he sped, and when Gabriel reached her little room, his greeting was, *"Hail, Full of Grace."*

Now you know—you know what makes souls shine and glow. The angel Gabriel has told the secret. *"Full of Grace,"* he said.—*Grace,* blessed *Grace,—GRACE IS GOD'S IMAGE IN THE SOUL*—the flame of Divine Love burns there. Yes, it is *Grace* that sets loving souls aglow and we like to think of them scattered all through *God's Sky* shining as the stars.

So grace is a very important thing, is it not? —How God must love it! It was really GRACE that drew His Divine Son from His bosom and brought Him to Mary to be our dear Saviour.

"Oh, it must be truly beautiful," you say, "could I not see some, just once, just for a moment?" No, no one here can see it. The little playmates of the little Mary, nor even her holy Mother, Saint Ann, ever caught one glimpse of that glorious light blazing within her. It needs the eyes we are to have one day in Heaven to see *Grace—This Wondrous Grace*—but it is very real, even so.

Did you never think that there are many very real things on this earth that we have never heard nor seen? That somehow since our Mother Eve's sin, our ears and eyes have never been just right? They are slow and dull. We miss many lovely things. We miss the soft, low sound of the grass as it grows; we miss the glad notes of the flowers as their petals uncurl; we miss the gentle words the summer breezes whisper. We cannot see the air all around us, yet so real and so important is it that not even for a moment could we live without it. And just so is it with *Grace* (though we do not see it), the instant our soul loses it, it *loses its precious life.* So there can be no doubt, you simply *must* have

Grace. For *NO GRACE—NO HEAVEN.*

Gracious me! what can I do about it? Do this,—begin to-day to be a very *MISER OF GRACE.* Do you know what a miser is? He is the man you read about in story books. The man who somehow gets a bit of money and loves it so, that he takes it out at night when the doors are closed; when all is still; when other eyes are shut, and he looks it up and down and round about and hugs it to his heart, and then when morning dawns, back to its hiding place it goes and off goes Mr. Miser to work to earn a little more. His food he begs, for never a penny will he spend, and night after night, coin after coin, he drops into his treasure bag. How his eyes shine, how his smile spreads as he sees his gleaming pile grow higher and rounder!

Now just such a miser, you must be. Yes, a miser of *Grace.* At Baptism, God gave you a precious *Grace* to start with, and now it is for you to be off like the miser, winning more and more. And goodness me, how easy it is! Not hard work like the miser's. Simply a Sign of the Cross, well made, an Our Father, a Hail

Mary; a true confession, a loving Communion, and Holy Mass (these bring enormous graces), yes, even to whisper with love the sweet names of Jesus and Mary.

This is your way of working for Grace,—is it not pleasant?

Why, you can start right away with the first sleepy stir in the morning, blessing yourself as you waken, and you need not stop until you are back again in your bed at night and you fall off into the land of nod. And it can be your own little secret with God, no one around you need know of the wonderful treasures you gather, for none can see your gleaming, glowing graces—none but your dear guardian angel who kneels by your side, with eyes of ecstacy, as he sees *God's own beauty growing in you.*

AND, OF COURSE, LIKE A GOOD MISER, not even a cent will you waste. "How do I waste GRACE?" Why, by sinning. That's how. One big sin costs the whole pile—think of it. Then, alas! what a soul! and what trouble to start in again!

Did you never try on a summer's evening to

follow a firefly, and was it not so hard that at last you gave it up? Hither and thither you go, and the light goes too, doesn't it, and you lose your firefly just when you think you have found it? It never grows any stronger . . . it never gets any brighter . . . but merely flashes in and out . . . in and out . . . and at last it goes out for good—and Mr. Firefly dies.

So it is with us and our precious GRACE if we are careless about saving it—if we spend it in sinning. Friday, perhaps, we do some wicked thing, and, ah me! out goes the light. Saturday we are sorry and make a good confession, and lo! our soul glows with God's Grace, and is dear to Him again. But the next day a new sin and darkness once more. . . . And so it is. . . . Some people spend their lives that way. Their store of GRACE never grows higher; its light never shines brighter; but it is in and out, in and out, all the time, their whole lives long. . . .

Dear me! what if my light should be out when the angel of death comes to take me from this

world!!! Mercy me! No *GRACE, NO HEAVEN!*

Dear God, sweet Lord, loving Father, does my soul please You? Can You see it glowing? Does it shine at all? Oh, I thank you that there is such a thing as GRACE. I thank You that there is something that can make my soul dear to Your Heart, something that can draw Your tender looks toward it.

How good You were, O my Father, to make my soul precious in Your sight when I was a little baby, at my baptism, even before I knew anything about GRACE. Dear Father, forgive me if I have ever grieved You, by losing Your GIFT, by letting GRACE slip away in sin, by letting my soul grow cold and dark. Help me, sweetest Saviour, to do better now; help me to BE a real, real miser; help me to grow daily in grace; help me that each day my soul may glow more and more, until it blazes so brightly and burns so deeply with Grace and love, that You will take me at last, to rest forever in Your loving arms.

I BELONG TO GOD

[Close your eyes, little miser of Grace, and be very quiet and tell Our Lord in your own words, just how you are going to try to win more GRACE. Then say the *Our Father.*]

SIX

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS PRESENT

(THE NATIVITY)

SIX

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS PRESENT

(THE NATIVITY)

DO you like *Once upon a time* stories? Well, this is to be a *Once upon a time* meditation. You are to have an adventure and you must make ready to journey to another land, and to travel backwards to the ages of kings and kingdoms, to the time of boys in velvets and curls and lacy ruffles—but let us be off—

I BELONG TO GOD

ONCE UPON A TIME there lived in a royal castle in a beautiful country far over the plunging, blue hills of the deep open sea, a dear little Prince named *Kindheart-Jack*.

He never had any brothers or sisters and his mother had gone to Heaven. His father was *King Greatheart*—he was called that because he was a very wise and a very kindly King, and because he loved his people like a dear good father.

But what a love he had for his son! What a father he was to his boy! What sweet hours they did spend together when the business of each day was over and the afternoon drew quietly to its close. Then the guards and courtiers were sent away; every care was laid aside; and the little boy and his father forgot that they were prince and king and took long tramps through the country, or—when the streaming clouds had drawn the curtains of the sky—stayed at home, and talked and played, or told stories and secrets, as you do.

As you would expect, Prince Kindheart-Jack was brought up with great care for some day he would be king. And though his masters found

him willing and ready to give himself to his lessons, still, like every real boy, he did love fun and sports. However, except when his cousin, the Princess Adelaide, came from a distance for a visit at the castle, he had no playmates.

Now it happened that the young Prince often watched from his window the gardener's son, who lived on the royal estate in a tiny cottage at the foot of a winding road. Each time when he was out for his daily ride with his riding-master he would gallop down that way, and drawing up his pony he would watch little Jean at his rollicking games. He liked his frank, bright, intelligent face and his gentle, shy manner, and longed to join him.

One day Prince Kindheart-Jack alighted, and spoke to him, but he turned sad at heart to see his poor ragged clothes. He was sad, too, to think that he should be growing up without teachers and training while he himself had such great attention, and that day, you may be sure, he rode slowly back to the castle silent and very thoughtful . . .

A few hours later we see him seated alone with

his father in the King's private room. Prince Kindheart-Jack's eyes are dancing and sparkling, as he cries excitedly, "Father, I spoke to him." "Spoke to him! Who's him?" "Father, you're teasing, you know—little Jean." "O, yes, little Jean," his Father answers . . . and after a moment. . . . "Well, what is it?" "Why, Father, he's great and I want a real favor. Father, your heart would ache if you saw how poor and neglected he is, but I have an idea." Then climbing into the King's arms he whispers, "Father, could he not come here each day to the castle and share my books and teachers—please, Father, please?"

The King was well satisfied with his little son's kindness of heart, and again and again, as some one dreaming, he slowly stroked the boy's dark hair. . . . Then he earnestly answered, "How could that be? You, the son of a king in prince's velvets and fringes, and little Jean, poor and tattered. He would not feel at home, my son, and he would be too frightened to study."

Prince Kindheart-Jack dropped his head on his Father's shoulder and they sat in deep silence

looking into the crackling fire. The angry flames roared up the great chimney, keeping away the autumn chill and throwing light and shadows on their serious, noble faces. Presently Kindheart-Jack cried out, "I have it, Father, I have it . . . if he cannot come to me, I can go to him? Each afternoon let me give up my riding lesson that I may spend the time with him—half play, half study. He need not know who I am. Oh, Father, do let me! Let me cover these clothes with old ones and no one will ever guess that I am the son of a King. It will be our secret," his eyes smiled at the picture, "I shall pretend he is my brother." He threw his arms around his Father and between hugs and caresses won an embrace, and *yes* for his answer.

Well! that very evening, who do you think was sent for?—*the royal tailor* to be sure. The royal tailor to measure Prince Kindheart-Jack for a new suit. But such a suit!—have you guessed?—a suit of Over-alls. *"A king's son in over-alls!"* you say. That is just what the dumbfounded tailor exclaimed, and when his

work was done he went off shaking his head and rubbing his nose—but he did not know the secret.

The next afternoon you could have seen a happy little boy in over-all blue—with a glance to the left and a glance to the right—swiftly leaving a side door of the castle and running over the hill in the direction of a lake. Some children were laughing and shouting and sliding on the first ice of the winter, and in a few minutes Prince Kindheart-Jack, with throbbing heart, reached them and joined in the frolic. The boys and girls, glad to have a new companion, romped and played harder than ever, and when tea-time called them in they shouted, with their good-byes, "We'll have more fun tomorrow."

That evening Prince Kindheart-Jack went home with rosy cheeks, and eyes merrier than the merry, silent stars that smiled down upon him and faithfully kept his happy secret.

For a while the shortening afternoons were spent like this, and little Jean watched every day for the boy in blue, who never failed to

come. Then when the sharp, cold winds sent them into the cosy cottage, Prince Kindheart-Jack brought his books under his arm and Jean and he studied in the humble kitchen.

Year after year slipped by and Jean's Father and Mother slipped away, too, to Heaven. This drew the boys into closer friendship, and day by day Prince Kindheart-Jack did more and more for Jean who lived quite alone with the aged gardener who took his father's place, but who never told the great secret.

The boys had passed their thirteenth birthdays, and now long walks over the hills and through the dense woods of the regal estate replaced their childhood play. Again and again as they walked along the winding road they would overtake the King and his royal guests hunting game, but the parties would pass each other without any one noticing the mischievous smile exchanged between father and son.

Then alas! came a day long to be remembered —a day of a great sorrow. The boys, returning from a long tramp in the gathering darkness —hearing heavy shooting close at hand, and

. . . SHADOWS AT SIDE OF THE GREAT BED

feeling their danger—turned quickly for shelter to a small stone lodge nearby. It had taken only a moment but they were too late! At that very instant a shot came crashing through the trees. Prince Kindheart-Jack saw it first and he also saw that Jean was in its direct path. Without a thought of his own peril he leaped forward to push him out of the way and fell instead with a cry of pain at his feet, and a bullet wound in his chest.

King Greatheart was not there but the hunters, who had heard the clamor, gathered quickly around him, much distressed indeed, over the accident. They found the blood streaming from the wound and the Prince lying silent, pale and motionless. All efforts to arouse him were in vain, and the men, fearing the worst, started to unloosen the worn over-alls at his neck. But their trembling hands were delayed in their work by *a frill of lace . . . ! a second suit . . . ! a suit of velvet . . . ?*

Filled with surprise at the discovery, they exclaimed excitedly, "What's this?" "Where does this boy live?" "In the castle," answered Jean.

"But his name, what is his name?" they kindly asked, for poor Jean was pale with sorrow. "His first name's Kindheart-Jack," he said, "I never heard his other, but his father works up there." The courtiers exchanged quick glances of pain and dismay. Was not the king's son Prince Kindheart-Jack? Had they killed the Prince—the future King? With fearful hearts they tenderly gathered up the motionless form, and the party moved, gently and sorrowfully off, in the direction of the castle.

Little Jean never could remember afterwards how they reached the castle—how they entered it—how they went upstairs—nor whom they met. He only knew that for days he sat enwrapped in shadows at the side of a great bed, his hand clasped by Kindheart-Jack's Father's, and that he told in whispers, over and over again, the story of the accident. His heart was too full of grief for his dying comrade to think of anything else, and the King was safely keeping his brave son's secret, ordering all simple and plain in the wing they were using.

Then one never-to-be-forgotten day, late in

the afternoon, came the longed-for moment. Softly opening his tired eyes, the Prince looked calmly into those two well-loved faces bending over him —"Father" and "Jean" he murmured with a fleeting smile, and quietly fell off into a peaceful, healing sleep. The dark days were over now, the hero-hearted boy was getting well; day by day he grew stronger and stronger, and the bedside visitors more grateful and happy.

Spring had passed and the days were growing soft with early summer. Gentle breezes, that were as music, danced through the spreading trees and all the roads were fringed with bright, fresh green. One morning, earlier than usual, the King called faithful Jean into the precious invalid's room and placed him beside him with extreme tenderness. Then taking into his hands the hand of each of the boys he said, with a happy smile, "Behold my *children*. From now on I shall have *two* sons—*Prince Kindheart-Jack and Prince Jean,*" and before the wondering Jean could speak he laid in his lap, and on the chair of Kindheart-Jack, suits of velvet and golden swords. Jean was so puzzled he

could not utter a word, and the good King smiled delightedly and said, "Jean, have you never guessed? Has grief benumbed your mind? Have you not guessed who the father of Kindheart-Jack is? Kindheart-Jack is a royal prince, the King's son, and I am the King of this country, and henceforth *YOU* are to be my son and a *prince* too."

Tears came into the eyes of the confused and wondering Jean, and tears of rejoicing into the eyes of the Prince . . . with this happiness his wasted strength would quickly return.

King Greatheart went on, "My Kingdom, my lands, my gold, my wealth, all, all is yours. Everything I have I now divide between you, my two dear sons, who will live with me here and be the joy of my old age."

As the good King and Father stopped speaking he turned and went softly out of the room leaving the two young princes together. What Prince Kindheart-Jack said to his beloved comrade and brother we leave you to guess, and also what was in the loyal heart of his faithful friend.

Happy Prince Jean, he had indeed found a

true friend and true brother; and happy Prince Kindheart-Jack who understood so well that *giving makes a happy heart,* and who had been ready *to give even his life for another.*— *"Greater Love Than This No Man Hath, That A Man Lay Down His Life For His Friend."*

Now, my little *reader,* what have you to say? Are you thinking how fortunate Jean was—a King's son to choose him for his brother? A King's son to hide his great name and to cover his rich garment with poor over-alls, and by and by to risk his life for him, and to share all his father's great wealth with him? Are you saying, "No one ever would do such a thing for me. . . ." But pause a moment . . . look at this picture and do not read another word until you see every one and everything in it and think quietly about it and about what it all means.

Who is the Baby? . . . Do you see His Mother? . . . Why is St. Joseph there? . . . Where is the Baby's Father? . . . This wee child is God's Son who has always been living in

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD

Heaven with Him. . . . Why did He come to earth and cover His beautiful spirit all over with human nature . . . ? Human nature is His over-alls—why does He wear it . . . ? Would He risk His life for you as Kindheart-Jack did for Jean . . . ? Did He . . . ? When you leave this World where will His Father invite you to live . . . ? What will He share with you . . . ?

[Think, dear fortunate child, how very wonderful this all is. Make a long list of the many, many things the Son of God has done for you and then close your eyes and thank the Baby Jesus—thank this dear little Prince over and over again for everything, and tell Him how much you love Him—love having Him for your Brother. *Our Father.*]

My joy I bring
My love I sing
As eagerly I hasten,
To worship low—
My soul a-glow—
In truest adoration.

O Brother mine
All things are Thine,
So what can I not boast of—
Thy Mother fair
Too, Thou dost share—
What have I not the most of?

I BELONG TO GOD

I do not fear
As I draw near,
Wee Prince, my gifts
to proffer—
For I have wealth,
Even Thyself,
A gift Divine
I offer.

Yet as I kneel
My heart, I feel
Thy Baby hands tight
grasping,
Of all I bring—
It is the thing
Thy yearning love is
asking.

SEVEN

WHEN HIGH HEAVEN MEETS OUR EARTH

(COMMUNION)

SEVEN

WHEN HIGH HEAVEN MEETS OUR EARTH

(COMMUNION)

"*GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR GOOD MOTHER! YOU ARE AMERICA'S GREATEST BOY.*"

These were the words said on June 13, 1927, by a great American Cardinal to the youthful hero of the air, at the tremendous reception in New

York, following his exploit by which the whole world had been thrilled.

What a wonderful trip that was!—*A flight through the air!* A journey from one country to another, made quickly—alone—like a bird *flying* with the wind a hundred miles an hour—near icebergs—over clouds and under storms—through sleet and rain and hail and sun and darkness—over land and sea and land again. He flew rapidly along—silent, eager and expectant—bearing a message of good will and peace—landing finally in a human sea—and was received by a welcoming multitude of rejoicing people.

How happy he was to greet these people faithfully waiting for him, and how the world wondered and marvelled and grew young and happy, *AND BELIEVED—AND HOPED —AND LOVED* anew.

Every one was talking of the *flight* of Colonel Lindbergh, talking—not because he had gone to Paris—but because he had gone *through the air*. Which do you like better—a kite lying still on a chair, or a kite in the air? And would ten soap

bubbles resting on the grass please you nearly so well as one floating in the air? How we admire the birds and butterflies and envy their swift passage from tree to tree and flower to flower! And how dearly we love those multitudes of Christmas angels flying high above the watching shepherds, singing their songs of joy and love over the little town of Bethlehem when our dear Saviour was born . . . angels flooding the skies with the bright light of their ravishing, gleaming beauty—beauty brought from heaven whence they had come.

Men saw the angels in the Heavens that night and ever since men have dreamed of *flying* through the air like that, longing to journey from land to land, not with the wings of birds, but with the God-given power of Angels.

But little wonder that people have this desire in their hearts. Did not the dear God put it there? Why, if Adam and Eve had not sinned each one of us would have our *flight*. Each one of us would have gone home to Heaven just that way. God would have called us in our turn and instantly we should have been off, easily and

swiftly taking our upward flight to Heaven and God. . . . Not after sickness and death, but thrilling with life and even more eager than the fluttering baby birds answering the call of the mother bird, from her nest on the tree-top, on a bright May morning.

BUT TO GET BACK TO OUR QUESTION. Did no human being ever *fly* before from country to country? Was Colonel Lindbergh the first? Birds have done it; angels have done it; but was he the first *man?*

I am thinking of the lovely spring day at the close of Our Lord's earthly life. The Babe of Bethlehem was now a man. He had worked—worked hard. He had taken care of His Mother; He had cured the sick; He had been kind to the sad and sorrowful; He had loved all —*and little children most of all;* He had helped every one and He had suffered and died on the Cross for our sins and He had risen from the dead;—*And Now When He is Thirty-Three Years Old His Father Calls Him Home.*

Keep close beside Him during His last hour on earth and see for yourself what is happening.

With His dear Mother and great numbers of His friends around Him, He leaves Jerusalem and walks to a beautiful spot called Mt. Olivet. As He talks to them and pours His great love out upon them in loving and more loving glances, they go slowly up the low mountain. Reaching the top, radiant and serene, He slowly lifts up His hands, and as He blesses them, He gently rises upward on His way to Heaven and *"a cloud receives Him out of their sight."*

Through meadows of stars
  Of tinted golds,
Up rainbow paths
  Of colors, in folds—
On, on through Heaven's blue
  He flies—
Colored blue by His watching Mother's eyes.

Was Colonel Lindbergh the first man to *fly* through the air? . . . Our catechism says Our Lord is true God and *TRUE MAN*. . . . Almost two thousand years ago, then, the first non-stop *air-flight* from country to country was made by the gentle Saviour of mankind. . . . Jesus

Christ with beating heart and eager eye and thrilling soul, with outstretched and upstretched hands, made His *flight* from earth to Heaven —through the tuneful beauty of glad nature's smiling and surpassing best—into a sea of expectant angels—into the arms of His Heavenly Father.

Then *IS* flying such a *RARE* thing? After his flight, Colonel Lindbergh said, *"Flying is my job. I look to the day when flying from country to country will be a regular thing"*—a daily occurrence.

In all reverence let us listen to Our Lord's words to His Father after His flight when, the heavenly welcome being over, He is telling of His future plans.

Do you not hear Him speaking of His coming flights—*air flights,* those flights to earth which he planned way back at the Last Supper? Hear him speaking of the promise He made to His friends—to the Apostles, His first priests, ordained at that Supper. He promised to come down from Heaven any time they called Him —every time, indeed, that they used the holy

words of consecration which He taught them that night. And not only would He come for them, but for the great army of priests until the end of the world. Jesus Christ had hardly reached home that first Ascension Thursday when He made known to His Court that the morrow would see his *return flight* to earth. And He tells them that He shall return, not once nor once a day, but as many times as He is called from daybreak until the going down of the sun. *AS OFTEN AS* there are Holy Masses with loving words of consecration and invitation,— *"This is My Body—This is My Blood."*

Is *flying* rare then? Rather is there any hour, any second of the day, when God's Ideal Man—God's Son, true God and true Man—is not passing through the air? And is there any country in God's earth where His loving children are not gathered in groups of thousands awaiting His arrival?

This is what He had in mind when He told of the power of those words and told His priests to use them to remember Him, and to recall Him.

"This is My Body, This is My Blood." It was His air-flights He was hinting at when He said, "I am the Bread which *cometh down* from Heaven."

HOW SIMPLE HE HAS MADE IT ALL! We kneel at Holy Mass—a deep silence enwraps us—the little bell is rung—the mighty words are said. The holy moment comes—and then—then the Priest is holding up the consecrated Host for us to adore. . . . Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has made another journey to earth. . . . We raise our heads; a little white cloud in the Priest's hands hides *Him* from us, but we know He is there. . . . And we know that He is looking lovingly upon us through that veil. . . . As we look, the eyes of the dear Babe of Bethlehem search deeply into ours; the eyes of the dear Lover of children; the eyes of the majestic Lord Who walked upon the water; Who stilled the storm; the eyes of the Great Good Shepherd—*the Shepherd Whose life is made up of flights to find and embrace His lambs.*

To you He is saying, as He said to Zacheus,

"This day I must abide in your house." This He says to each of His children each morning. This is the purpose of His *flight*. There at the altar rail leaving the hands of His priest, He ends His journey as He sinks gently down into your heart when you kneel with bowed head ready to fold Him in your embrace. . . .

Then with Him, as your Guest, everything else is forgotten, and you try to reward Him for His long journey by your silent welcome full of words of joy and love and thanks and praise, and love again and again. He never tires listening and can *you* ever tire of thanking Him for coming in this wonderful way. . . ? Is it not beautiful?

Little six-year-old Betty said one day, "How powerful Our Lord is . . . if He wants to be a great, big God in Heaven, He can be that; if He wants to be a little Baby in His Crib, He can be that; if He wants to cover Himself up in a tiny white Host He can do that. He is so powerful He can do anything He wants, why—(with an eager little burst)—*He is more powerfuler than the devil.*"

Betty was right, but Jane had a difficulty. Jane loved Our Lord dearly and received Him daily but, "If I could see Him *just once* in Communion," she said. She was told that no one could really see the brightness of His Divine Beauty in the Host and live. "I'm sure *I* could," she answered unconvinced. This thought came back to her again and again and a few years later she understood.

With every one else, quite speechless, she was viewing the great eclipse of the sun that glorious January morning in 1925, through colored

glass. She saw the moon, looking like a round black lid, slowly creeping over the sun and slowly covering up its light. Many times she tried to look without her glass at the marvellous sight but the light blinded her. Then the moment came when the great black lid settled itself squarely over the sun wholly shutting off its light. . . . Twilight had fallen upon the earth and nature was wrapped in twilight peace at nine in the morning. . . . Now she could look without her glass . . . but for how long? In a twinkling the black moon began to slide off on the other side and Jane found even the little *rim* of growing sunlight so dazzling that she could see nothing at all—she could not even look—until she took up her glass again.

Everybody had been following that eclipse in almost religious silence, and when it was over and we turned to go Jane was the first to speak, —"*At last I know that I could never look at Our Lord without the little round Host covering Him,*" she whispered, and the eyes I looked down into were ready to run over.—Yes, a cloud must hide Him from our sight for surely He,

who made the sun, must be far brighter than the sun.

O Blessed Jesus! I am so glad to be thinking about Holy Communion. I kneel before You happy in the thought that You are here on the Altar. Angels are all around in silence adoring You, and I kneel with them to adore You too, and to thank You for all the pains You take to come to us and to live in our churches—in Your churches, dearest Jesus,—and in our hearts.

Yes, Lord Jesus, I believe You are here—Body; Blood; Soul; and Divinity. . . . You Yourself. . . . Your Sacred Human Feet which Magdalene kissed are here, and The Hands behind the little white cloud are the same hands once dripping with Blood and nailed to the Cross.—Your holy Eyes that filled with tenderest tears and wept at Lazarus's grave . . . these Eyes are here, and the beautiful Face, and the blessed Lips, which spoke the words that healed and soothed and comforted, are here, too. . . . Yes, Lord Jesus, I believe, I adore.

You have come countless times to countless

souls since that first Mass on the first Holy Thursday, come in countless Holy Communions; but I believe that Your love never wearies of coming, that there is never greater joy in Your Heart than at the moment when You unite Yourself to Your poor children.

O faithful Heart of Jesus, how I thank You for Your great Love. O come to me often; come to me daily and take possession of my soul and body. Unite me closely to You. Let me see through Your Eyes, let me hear with Your Ears, let me think with Your Mind—let me speak with Your words, with Your sweet tones—teach me to love as You love.

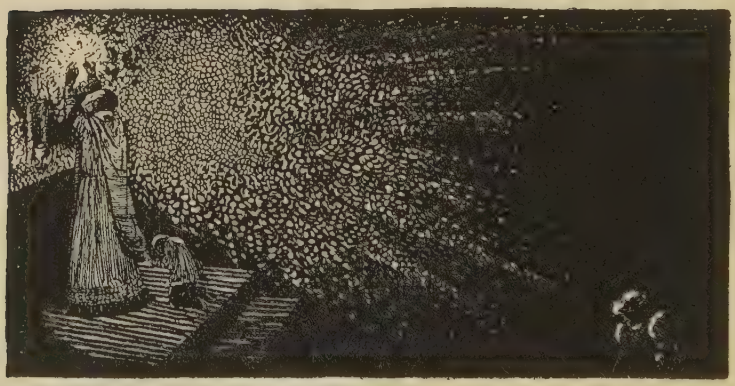
"THIS IS THE BREAD WHICH COMETH DOWN FROM HEAVEN; THAT IF ANY MAN EAT OF IT, HE MAY NOT DIE."

Rockets, bursting in light and fire, show the airman where to land. I know grace makes my soul radiant with far greater light and beauty.

"Help me, O Jesus, that day by day grace may be constantly blazing in my soul showing that it is prepared for your coming—a safe and

ready landing place. O help me, dearest Saviour, to receive You without fear and with joy. Help me in my daily VISITS *to prepare for my next morning's Communion. Help me to grow strong, for You are my Food, my heavenly Tonic. Help me not only to keep always in the state of grace and to want to please You in my Communions, but help me to detest even little sins and to grow purer and holier each day."*

[Now child, beloved of Jesus, ask yourself if you will ever really guess how much He loves you. Try to think of the many plans and great pains He has taken to come to be the guest of your heart. Be very prayerful and grateful, and end with an Act of Love.]



EIGHT

"WITH JOY" AND A BIRTHDAY

(CONFIRMATION)

THE GREAT BIRTHDAY AT THE CENACLE

. . . why is Peter so changed?—Why? Because he was at the birthday and—

EIGHT

"WITH JOY" AND A BIRTHDAY

(CONFIRMATION)

I AM thinking of a beautiful *birthday*—a very, very beautiful one indeed. Is there anything you love quite so much as a birthday?—and besides, this is the birthday of a ravishing Bride.

It is, of course, not only baby brothers and sisters who have birthdays. As you know, the Fourth of July is the birthday of our nation—Christianity had its birthday—each year has its birthday—flags have birthdays and other things have their birthdays too—but you shall see.

This is a birthday in lovely June and Love seems to be everywhere. Love is in the early

morning mists, so refreshing, which hang like fairy veils over the awakening landscape. It is in the new-born breezes rustling in the early summer leaves; it is in the clear, bright blue of the air; it is in the scent of the flowers; it is in the glad shining of the sun and it is in the song of the lark as he mounts up to heaven singing his morning hymn. It is in the humming of the bees and the flitting of the butterflies. It is a morning of most exquisite *Love*—as you will see for yourself.

The Holy Ghost was present at this birthday, and so was St. Peter, and before we talk about it we must do some thinking about St. Peter—see two pictures of him.

LET US THEN, THINK SLOWLY—AND SADLY REALLY—IN THE FIRST PICTURE for we are going to think of a very bitter day in his life. The picture is a very, very, sorrowful one truly and if Peter had not turned out to be a dear, holy saint of God—one of His greatest—I should never dare to speak of this at all.

It is the night of Our Lord's Passion—those painful hours between the Last Supper and The Carrying of the Cross—and Peter is there. As the Eastern twilight deepens into purple midnight Our Lord finishes His prayer of Agony in the Garden of Olives and the soldiers, as you know steal over the soft grass among the trees with their lanterns and swords. . . . They bind Him with heavy ropes . . . and chains . . . and He makes no resistance as they drag Him away to judges and to prison.

But His Apostles are with Him? No, not they. They *were* with Him and they *were* taking a good sleep in the moonlit garden until the soldiers came . . . but then, filled with fear, "They all forsook Him and fled." *All? Peter too?* Yes, even Peter whom Our Lord had always thought of first and treated best.

However, a little later Peter and John came back. They came back to the Court to hear what was happening, and John went in to be near Our outraged Lord . . . but not Peter. Peter had lost his courage. He loves Our

Lord dearly—very dearly—and could not stay away from Him, but now that he has come back, he trembles and hesitates and fears.

And so . . . restless and troubled . . . see him stealing along on the outskirts of the crowd like a coward. . . . There are millions of people in Jerusalem at this time to keep the great feast day of the Pasch. Fearing all the while lest any one should recognize him as the Master's friend, Peter walks along in the darkest places with his head down. So, as he has run away and has come back, he goes here and he goes there. Weary . . . uneasy . . . "he stands at the door *without*" . . . he sits . . . he follows this crowd and that . . . he listens to what angry men are saying . . . he goes into the "Court below" . . . and at last he sits down again to *warm* himself by the fire.

And now a most awful thing happens. . . . I am ashamed to tell you— Three times within the next hour Peter denies that he knows Our Lord, just exactly when He most needs a friend to stand up for Him. . . . "I know *not* this man," he says once—twice—three times. *And,*

I say this in a whisper, he even says it cursing and swearing.

And—how very, very sad it was really—just at this moment, just as Peter is speaking Our Lord is led past and hears every word he says, even the swearing. . . . This was for Our Lord one of the deepest tortures of that terrible night. What a pained look He gives Peter—not an angry one—and how Peter bursts into tears weeping as though his heart would break. . . .

Is it not a night of misery? And just as Peter finishes speaking, somewhere outside a cock

crows and they say that until the day he died, every night at cock-crow, he threw himself on his knees and wept afresh for his sin *even when he was Pope*—he was the first one, you know.

NOW LET US SEE THE SECOND PICTURE. It is outside the *Cenacle*—outside the *Upper Room* —My!—what an immense crowd of people! Dressed in the bright colors of different nations they look like beds of gay flowers dotting the emerald carpet this perfect June afternoon.—A feverish hum fills the air.

But why do they speak so many languages? Why, because they have come from every land under heaven. They came for the Pasch and they have been staying on for fifty days and more. Many of them saw Our Lord crucified and even helped to do it—but that is passed.

Early *this* morning some passers-by said they heard heavenly sounds and saw glimmerings of heavenly light coming from this upper chamber. The rumor spread and the crowd has been growing larger every minute; some are saying

that a great miracle has taken place and all are waiting to know what is going on within.

Suddenly a door opens and a man bursts into view. As he appears on the threshold the great crowd trembles with awe—*is it a man or an angel?* Every eye is fixed on his radiant face. A soft light seems to encircle him . . . his glance is aflame with eager love . . . his arms are upstretched . . . and like a storm of heavenly music, they hear him speaking in a wonderful way of God. He is as one in an ecstasy and the words which fall from his lips are flashes of fire—and life—and sweetness—and joy—and Divine Love.

Each heart in that swaying multitude is lifted up at once, and every one understands him though he uses a language many do not know. Carried out of themselves they melt with love as they hear him say that God, in an-unheard-of-way, had poured forth His Spirit upon all in the Upper Room a few hours earlier.

He goes on, and in burning words he dares to speak to these Jews—these enemies of Our Lord—telling them of Jesus, the Jesus Whom they

crucified—telling them that He is really God. As he speaks they are standing in sight of Calvary where they had done that awful deed, but he speaks on unafraid. On and on he goes recalling His Mighty Love for them,—the Love that made Him lay down His Life for them—and the faces in that great crowd soften. . . . His words have set their hearts a-fire, and their souls a-dancing. . . . There is a marked stir among the people and, vibrant with emotion, they cry out, "What must we do? . . . What must we do?" . . .

"Do penance," he calmly answers, "do penance and be baptized in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and *you,* too, shall receive the *gift* of the Holy Ghost."

What a change has come over these Jews! And wonderful to relate, the gentle speaker and his brethren go among them pouring the waters of baptism over the heads of one after another of that eager throng, until it becomes a sea of souls inflamed with heavenly grace. These then, are the souls of the first Christians, souls turned upward to God—a multitude of souls

that has become more beautiful than a garden of three thousand pure white lilies shining in the dazzling sun.

AND NOW FOR THE BIRTHDAY.

Who is going to guess the name of this great speaker—of this miracle-worker—of this hero-saint—for it took a brave and fearless man to speak as he did. Can you guess it? Can you recognize in this fearless lover of Christ any one of whom we have been thinking? Does it recall the man you saw knee-deep in fright and dread? No? Can you believe it is Peter? Peter!! Yes, it *is* astonishing. There is not much resemblance between this dauntless Soldier of Christ—this Apostle, boldly preaching Jesus Crucified—and the timid and faint-hearted Peter whom we saw only about seven weeks ago slinking along the edge of the crowd muttering "I know Him not." Can it be the same? you ask. What *has* happened? What has made him so different? Why, it all happened at the birthday. The story is this—

It is very simple and very sweet, too. It is a *birthday gift* that has changed him so, a miracle-

gift. *Peter was at a glorious birthday this morning in the Cenacle.* No, not his birthday, but the glorious birthday of a ravishing *BRIDE —THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST . . .* I mean His Church, *The Church is the Bride of Christ.* Every-one at that blessed party received a Gift . . . A surpassing Gift. . . . Something better than a crown of diamonds or a throne of gold . . . and it was Peter's Gift that made him a changed man.

You see, he was there in the Cenacle "persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus,—*our dear Mother Mary was at the party*—and with His brethren . . . and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting —And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, which sat upon every one of them: and they were *all filled with the Holy Ghost.*"

THE HOLY GHOST WAS ST. PETER'S GIFT ON THAT GREAT BIRTHDAY.

This was the day of *Pentecost,* this birthday of the lovely Bride—Christ's Church. (The

Church has a birthday too, you see. . . . Be sure always to keep it.)

Dear St. Peter does not know himself he is so happy. He thought he had been happy at the Last Supper when Our Lord had made him a Priest and given him his First Holy Communion in this very Cenacle; happy, too, when here, likewise he had received the wondrous power to forgive sins and deal out the sweet mercy of God, but never was he so happy as now.

Perhaps, like the old lady of the Fairy Tale, who went to market, he wanted to ask, "Lord, is it I?" He feels as though he has already gone to Heaven or as though Heaven has come down into his heart. And this is really what happened. God has given him His *Gift of Love,* His Holy Spirit, His best Gift—*The Holy Ghost Has Come To Live Anew In His Soul, And To Make Him More Than Ever His Living Temple.*

Behold, the whole room was aglow with a soft, heavenly light as St. Peter looked about him and he saw the Tongues of Fire on the heads of every one of the one hundred and twenty people pres-

ent in the Cenacle. These faces were radiant as angels and he knew that each was filled, as he was, with the Happiness of the Blessed Trinity; with the Sweet Fragrance of God, and each wrapped in the Embrace of the Father and the Son. Within each one was the dear *Father of the Poor, the Giver of Heavenly gifts, God's best Consoler, sweetest Guest and dear Refreshment.*

"I will send a Comforter," Our Lord had promised, and He has kept His word. The gentle Spirit of God has come and has made weak men into heroic Soldiers who will henceforth give to Christ every thought they think, every step they take, every breath they draw—who will die in the end for Him—*suffer and die for love of Him, rejoicing to do so.*

THIS WAS THE APOSTLES' CONFIRMATION DAY. THE FIRST CONFIRMATION DAY THERE EVER WAS.

And so, you see, it was St. Peter's Gift—*the coming of the Holy Ghost into his soul*—that made all the difference.

I know an American Priest who lived four years in Rome and who went often to pray in the

Church of the Pope—the great Basilica of St. Peter—which is built on the very spot where St. Peter gladly suffered crucifixion for love of Our Lord.

This Priest told me a very interesting thing and I am going to tell it to you.

He said that there is just one window in St. Peter's (the rest of the light of this magnificent building comes through little chinks high up out of sight) and that one is a beautiful stained glass window of the Holy Ghost. As the clear, bright light of the soft Italian sun streams through it, it falls—where do you think?—directly on the Chair of St. Peter.

This is the chair in which Popes have sat through the centuries when teaching the great truths of God. It seems as though the light falls just there to remind us that Our Lord said His Holy Spirit would be *with* the Church until the end, and to remind us, too, that when we hear the Roman Pontiffs we hear Him—*"He who hears you hears Me."*

And the priest said (and I am sure you will agree with him) the thing that makes all the dif-

ference in the world between this person and that one, and our Church (The Catholic Church) and the others, is just this— *the Indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.*

So, dearest Lord, if I am to be changed, I MUST have your Holy spirit.

O Holy Mary, Mother of God, O Our Lady of the Cenacle, pray for me that God's Holy Spirit may come to me in my Confirmation. . . . But not only then. Pray that He may come anew in each Confession; in each Communion; in every Sacrament I receive.

Pray that this *GIFT* will change me utterly and that I may live and suffer and die for Jesus Christ.—

Tom, a boy I know, was being confirmed last May. He was sitting with hundreds of other girls and boys in a large church waiting to be made a Soldier of Jesus Christ.

Before the Bishop began the ceremony, he was talking to the children about the great *Gift* and asking them questions. The Bishop liked Tom's answer so well that he called him up and placed him near him on the altar step, and then

confirmed him first of all. I shall tell you what it was.

The other children had said "When I am confirmed, I shall live and suffer and die for Jesus Christ," which was quite right.

When Tom was asked, he answered, "When I am confirmed, I shall live and suffer and die for Jesus Christ with joy," he added, *with joy*. The Bishop loved it, and *with joy* won for Tom first place at the Confirmation.

ALL FOR CHRIST JOYFULLY will win you first place in His Sacred Heart and surely a first place in His Heaven.

Our Lady of the Cenacle teach me to live and suffer and die with joy for Jesus Christ.

Come, Holy Ghost, come, O Holy Spirit of God, come with Thy Grace, with Thy Gifts, with Thy Fruits, come and show me, Thyself, how to use each of these blessed treasures.

[Favored Child of God—Brother of Jesus—Soldier of Christ—now four questions for you:—

"Is there anything God has not done for me?"

"What have I done for Him?"

"What am I doing for Him?"

"What shall I do for Him?"

Answer them one by one . . . then in your own words say silent, loving prayers of love and thanks—and promise.]

Oh may my soul *a Cenacle*—
A quiet holy place—
Be ever filled with God's own joy
And all His gifts of grace.

When you make a retreat
begin here,
This you do, of course,
just once a year.

. . . like two loving friends when we are left alone together

MAKING A RETREAT

WHY am I making this little retreat?—*to learn to know God and myself better.*

Of course, every day I must try to know and serve and love God, that is really why I am in this world, but while I am making my retreat I am at school—*at the school of God*—studying Him and studying myself very earnestly.

Often in my life I shall be left alone with God, and so I should know Him very, very well and should like to be with Him—then we shall be like two loving friends when we are left alone together. . . . When I was born it was just God and myself; in my prayers it is just God and I—in my confession, with my eyes closed, no one but God and I—in Holy Communion, with my head bowed low, I am alone with God—when life is ending and I am dying, Mother and all

will be left behind, and then, too, it will be just God and I—and again after death, when I am standing before the great white throne, waiting to be sent to Heaven or to Hell, most surely, I shall be alone with God my Creator, and my Father, and the great Lover of my soul.

So I really want to know Him very well. During these days I must try to think as little as I can about everybody and everything else and as much as I can of Him.

Making my meditation means kneeling at His knee, with play and people put out of my mind, reading quietly and *very slowly,* word by word, what is written here and *thinking* and *praying* quietly about it and about what it means.

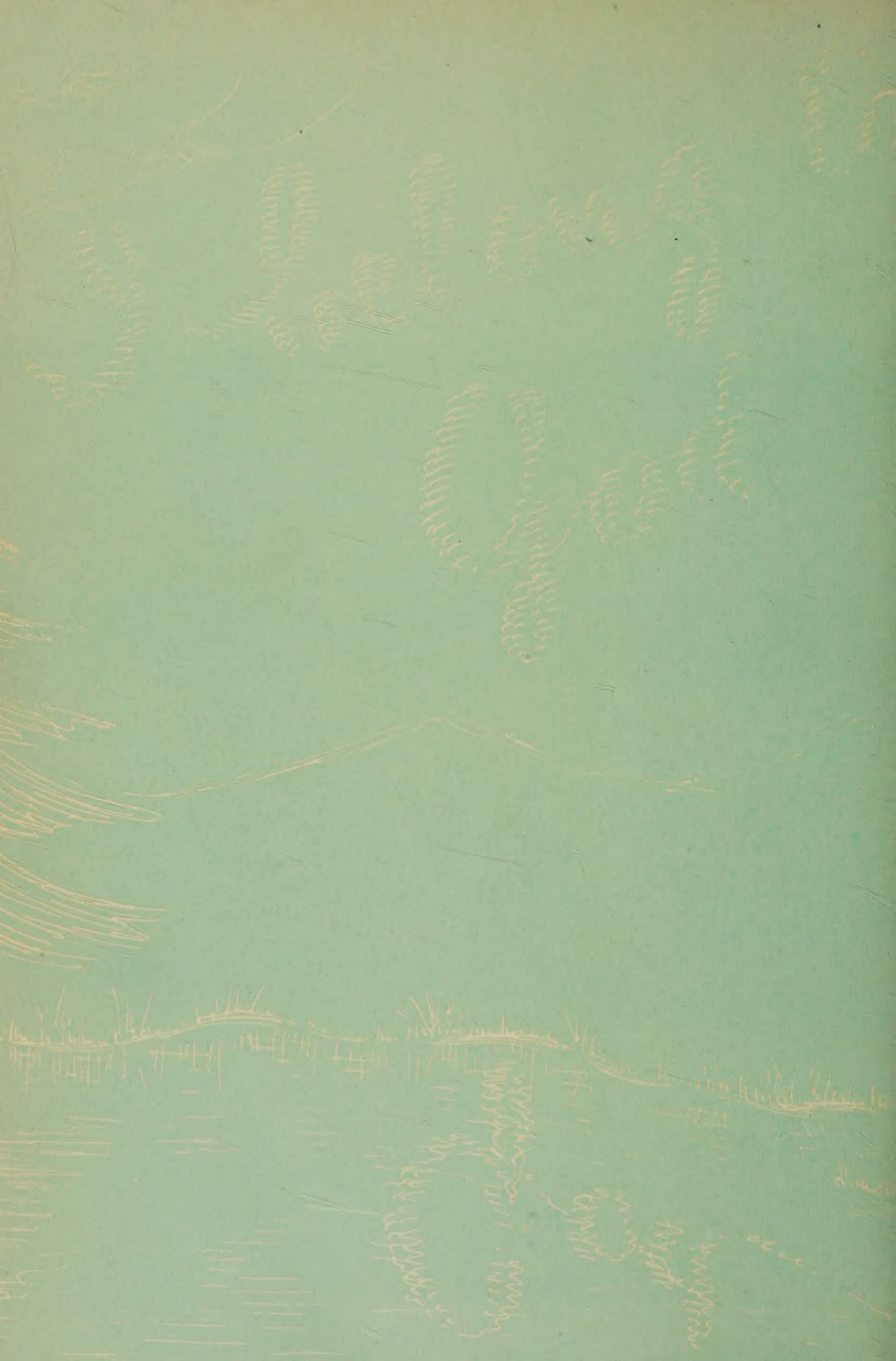
PRAYER

(SAY BEFORE YOU BEGIN)

Dearest Jesus, My Lord and my God, I am so happy to be here thinking about You and I thank You for letting me come. Other boys and girls are at school or at work, or out in the dusty and noisy city, but I am with You. . . . how fortunate I am! Please help me to make my Meditation very well and send the light of Your Holy Spirit into my mind, that I may learn to know You much better than I do, and love You best of all.

A CHILD, tiptoe, I stretch to Thee
My little hand, that so, maybe,
'Twill nestle snugly into Thine
And Thou, the Way, will thus be mine
Throughout the long, drear hours of night,
Till Thou art mine Eternal Light.

E. P. Tivnan, S.J.



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AUTHOR CLARK, LILLIAN

TITLE I Belong to God.

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